

## **WHAT YOUR PATIENTS ARE READING....continued**

at 81 sampling sites in 23 states, from the Canadian border south to Missouri and from the East Coast to the Dakotas.

According to Goolsby, atrazine, the most prevalent of the chemicals, has been found in the 23 states, with the highest concentrations in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas.

According to Dr. Don Kuhlman, an expert in agricultural entomology with the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, most farmers have already begun reducing their use of pesticides.

"Farmers are fine-tuning to reduce costs and also because they're aware of the issues," Kuhlman said. "And they're personally concerned because they're using the products themselves."

"They feel like they're the victims in this," he added. "There's a public perception that they're applying rates of pesticides that are exceptionally high. But all the survey data we have suggests they're applying them according to label directions."

But a new study by the Washington-based Natural Resources Defense Council suggests that herbicide use on Midwest corn and soybean fields could be reduced even further, by as much as 50 percent, if more farmers adopted new farming techniques such as planting weed-smothering crops between rows, applying weed killers only in problem areas instead of across all fields, and rotating more varied crops.

"The only way to stop the problem is to stop it before it starts," Marquardt of Greenpeace argues. "There's no way to put a filter on a cloud."

Portions taken from the *Chicago Tribune*, Sunday, June 2, 1991.

### ***Report Urges 'Respect' For Environmentally Sensitive***

By Tom Spears

People whose health is affected by everyday pollution must not be "dismissed as neurotic," a major workshop sponsored by Health and Welfare Canada has decided.

The federal department is mailing thousands of copies of a report to doctors across the country urging "respect and support" for patients made ill by substances that don't bother most people.

"Knowledge of environmental sensitivities should be imparted to medical students and to practicing physicians," the summary of the medical workshop says.

People with environmental sensitivities suffer a variety of symptoms from exposure to small amounts of common chemicals such as tobacco smoke, perfume, food additives and cleaning products.

The symptoms can range from migraine headaches and nausea to symptoms that resemble mental illness, said Chris Brown, president of the Ottawa chapter of the Allergy and Environmental Health Association. The group has about 300 members who suffer from environmental sensitivities.

Brown said some doctors have refused to recognize environmental sensitivities as a health problem with a physical cause.

"They say we're crackers," he said. "The biggest problem we face, like many disabled groups, is a lack of understanding in the community."

"We're fantastically appreciative of the report," he said.

The workshop's summary report says patients suffer even more when doctors imply "they are imagining their symptoms, or have some vague, untreatable mental illness."

And it says doctors interested in the problem suffer a "social stigma" in the medical community.

The May 1990 workshop had 48 delegates from the Canadian Medical Association, Health and Welfare, several provincial health ministries, medical schools and major hospitals. Other recommendations included:

- Setting up a central registry of doctors trained to treat the problem;
- Ensuring that insurance companies show "no discrimination against environmentally sensitive patients with regard to payment for medication, assistive devices and other illness-related expenses;" and
- Sending more information on the problem to "other groups of doctors besides allergists."

Portions taken from the *Ottawa Citizen*, April 20, 1991, p. A-6.

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**Environmental Medicine Part III - Advanced"**

**July 26<sup>th</sup>**